

BEACON LIGHT

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden... In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

MATTHEW 5:14,16 ESV

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THE CHALLENGE OF NEW BEGINNINGS

By Marian Mendoza

"Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, 'The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.' The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him."

Lamentations 3:22-25 NIV

This week, I was listening to *Great is Thy Faithfulness*, and I was filled with such gratitude that I had to stop to reflect on how God has been so kind to me. With every obstacle I've had in my young life, I am repeatedly in awe of His mercy. Some of these obstacles are daunting new beginnings. The uncertainty of beginning a new phase in life can give us excitement, but it can also bring about anxiety of the forthcoming challenges with change. Lam 3:22-25 reminds me that God is faithful, and when we trust in His promises, we have all the assurance that we need.

Whether it's a new job, relationship, fitness plan, mortgage or any sort of commitment, the new beginning and its journey ultimately test our character, patience and faith. When we put our hope in God and His guidance, we give ourselves the ability to patiently work towards a goal without immediate consequences. We dedicate efforts knowing that the results will be long-term.

The opportunity to be a part of the Beacon Light felt like God's calling; a way for me to contribute to His service. I've faced challenges in taking on this new role, including learning of the Beacon Light's history, the church's structure, and finding writers. With God's grace and a supportive team, I've been blessed through each stage of the process.

The message of the Beacon Light is in Matthew 5:14, 16, "You are the light of the world. [...] Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." The church newsletter is a medium for Mount Zion to share with our community of how God has been working in our lives as individuals and as a congregation. As the Beacon Light is renewed this year, let its development be a reflection of how our church is abounding in faith and ministry. Let God guide us as we begin a new path and grow in His goodness.



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

ILE & TMI

There is a saying that is often mentioned when we speak of witnessing or evangelism: "People don't care how much we know until they know how much we care." The point is that we can teach and preach all we want, but if people feel misunderstood, disconnected, unloved, and unaccepted, then our witness will be powerless, no matter how powerful the preaching in the pulpit is or how truthful our teaching is.

This leads to the evangelism principle of Integrated Lifestyle Evangelism or ILE. ILE sounds simple, yet it has a very profound Biblical basis. ILE includes the areas of acceptance, welcoming, openness, caring, generosity, and kindness, etc. These qualities all have to do with the way God would have Christians relate both to one another and to those whom they are seeking to reach for the Lord.

What is important to this process is that we have relationships and friendships outside of our church family. Because many of us study and work in the secular world, we will naturally have many acquaintances, but acquaintances are not close friends. However, acquaintances can become friends through ILE. In other words, ILE is the intentional making of new friends through acquaintances that we already have. ILE is not just a program that can be shut on or off on occasion; rather, it is the way we live so that our acquaintances can become our friends.

Aside from ILE, we also need to understand another evangelism principle: TMI or Total Membership Involvement. TMI as the term suggests is about the principle of every member an evangelist! Not every member is called to be a preacher or a teacher, but every member should know and accept that he/she is a bearer and a facilitator of the Good News of salvation. Having said that, the church should be able to come up with ministries where each member is able to pursue his/her call as an evangelist in a simple, yet dynamic manner.

As a church we will have to start pursuing our ministries with ILE & TMI as our primary evangelistic tool. We began this year with a TMI document that we have given to you where we solicit the information regarding your family and friends who are outside of our

church. We believe that our priority in evangelism should be those who are already connected with us (family and close friends/associates). We have made a simple TMI process this year. We are asking that every member or each family will submit a list of names of their loved ones to our church to be included in our prayer list and for potential future follow-up work for evangelism.

We believe that praying for our loved ones first and foremost is our best tool for evangelism. We know that the Lord will open more opportunities for follow-up work with these loved ones as we are able to present them regularly to the Lord in prayer.

As we continue to pursue the Great Commission, I hope and pray that ILE and TMI will be accepted and embraced by our church family.

Yours in Christ's love and service,
Pastor Jesse Anunciacion



PHOTO - MTZION.CA

LOOKING AHEAD

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| May 5-7 | Tools for Witnessing
(How to Introduce your friends to Christ) |
| May 6 | Adventurer Ministry Emphasis |
| June 2-3 | Southern Ontario Regional Camp Meeting |
| June 24 | Ontario Conference Camp Meeting |

MISSION TRIP | FRONTIER

By Andrew Skytte

On March 8, 2017, 22 volunteers from Ontario & Alberta set out for on a mission trip to Iloilo City, Philippines - (having been invited by the West Visayan Conference). The team arrived on March 10 and began serving the community right away. On Saturday night, the team assembled the Dental and Medical clinics on the conference office compound. On Sabbath morning, 8 members of our team set out to speak in various churches in Iloilo, including the Iloilo District Jail. Sunday morning we sponsored a half day where homeless and needy children were brought to the conference grounds for an afternoon of games and lunch. Over 300 children were fed that afternoon. The dental and medical teams began serving patients on Sunday afternoon, and by Friday night, they had served over 2400 people. The medical clinic saw 1016 people, the dental clinic saw 591 and the Optometry clinic saw 781 people.

Besides the dental and medical services, Allan Heacock led a team of volunteers to Barrio Orero where they began construction on what will be the the first SDA church in Barrio Obrero.

Pastor Richard Means, Pastor Alison Down, Pam Lister, Rosendo Cuizon, Nonie Abrece and Andrew Skytte - conducted week of prayer in the local schools and academies.

Pastor Ishmael Ali conducted an evangelistic series in the Iloilo District Jail - 15 inmates were baptized and another 7 requested baptism.

Pastor Bill Santos conducted the district wide evangelism each night held at the Iloilo Central SDA Church. To date, 76 souls have been baptized, with more to come. On our final Sunday in Iloilo, half of the team headed to the Iloilo District Jail early in the morning to set up our dental clinic. The dentists and hygienist served 61 inmates, 388 pairs of reading glasses were distributed, and vitamins and supplements were also distributed. Five members of the team came from Mount Zion.



PHOTO - ANDREW SKYTTE

STRONG RELATIONSHIPS - STRONG SPIRITUAL FOUNDATIONS | FORTIFIER

By Emicil Dela Cruz

CARING MINISTRY HAS LAUNCHED. The Elders, Deacons, and Deaconesses under the Fortifier Team have started the Caring Ministry this quarter, a bold attempt designed to reach out to church members outside of our inner circle. The purpose of this ministry is for each member to start relationships with other church members who, while being considered as friends, are usually outside our inner circle.

The elders and deacons will lead out by making regular contacts with church families they don't usually spend much time with. Emphasis is on frequent and regular contact in the form of house visits, social interaction

outside the church or residence, phone calls, and fellowship during church potluck. As these church leaders reach out to church families, new bonds of friendships are expected to form. Eventually each member's circle of friends will increase and overlap others' circle of friends to form strong and lasting bonds of friendship.

As believers in Christ and recipients of His amazing grace, we are expected to experience change and be instigators of change as well. As life goes on we must reach out to everyone, not just to our good old trusted cliques, but to everyone within our sphere of influence. Cultivating strong bonds of friendships should be

an ongoing practice in every Christian life. If this becomes a habit of every Mt. Zion member, then great are the blessings our church will reap. Unity will not be just a goal to reach for but will become a way of life.

The Elders and Deacons are striving to be the initiators of this activity. They will lead but the whole church should follow. Each member must make a deliberate and committed effort to break out of their inner circles and reach out to others. It is our prayer that eventually the church will be one unit of interlocking well-founded relationships united in direction and goals, in prayer and worship, and in committed service to our Lord.

ADVENTIST CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

TRUE EVANGELISM: REFLECTING ON THE ACF RETREAT

By Jedd Fritz Frias

In mid-February, I had the opportunity to attend the Adventist Christian Fellowship (ACF) retreat at Camp Frenda for post-secondary students. Many students who were there are actively involved in campus ministry clubs at their respective public universities. This weekend was the most spiritually refreshing and inspiring experience I have had in a long time. For me, the highlight was being surrounded by so many other young people full of thoughts and ideas. Growing up in the church, I was raised in a particular lifestyle – I was taught certain things and was exposed to mostly specific opinions. Nonetheless, as a critical thinker (or at least I hope that to be the case), my mind gets filled with so many questions that I have not found answers to in church service. The retreat provided me with what I needed – the opportunity for a forum of free dialogue. I interacted with dozens of other critical thinking young people who also yearned to engage in open discussion.

The key elements to these conversations was that no topic was seen as too taboo, and no one was straight to jump to the “obvious answer” that would probably be commonly argued by the church. This allowed for the engagement into subject matter that many non-religious individuals, and in-church young people, including myself, often question (like abortion, euthanasia, and homosexuality). Moreover, because people were open about their differing stages in religious conviction, it forced debate to be done from a position of reason rather than faith. Overall, the weekend exposed me to a variety of well-backed opinions and arguments. There may have not been universal agreement, but we were all accepting of each other and acknowledging the fact that we did not have all the definitive right answers.

ACF’s youth is largely comprised of undergraduate students who seek to bring others to Christ at their public universities through campus ministries. When attempting to show Jesus to non-followers, no question or topic is off-limits.

As Christians, we should be willing to indulge in conversation with non-Christians in whatever issue they may be concerned with. Furthermore, I advise that we be able to reason from a perspective of logic. The authority of the Bible is challenging to convey to someone who does not accept it as the word of God. Doing so acknowledges that faith and reason are not negating components of spirituality, but rather, complementary in understanding purpose and structure in our world. I believe that being able to share the connection between these two can be instrumental in bringing people closer to God. That’s why the experience I had at Camp Frenda was truly inspirational. It was a reflection of what I believe true evangelism is supposed to look like: open, non-judgemental, logical, and equally applicable to Christians and non-Christians.

Additionally, genuine evangelism demonstrates real care for others’ opinions while also acknowledging our own limitations in knowledge. ACF is a ministry I wholeheartedly support. I have no doubt that many of the individuals there with whom I interacted with are what Jesus would be proud to call His fishers of men.

**“ATTENDING ACF
CAMP FREND
GIVES ME A
GLIMPSE OF
WHAT HEAVEN
WOULD BE LIKE.”**

– OB REY



HEART TO HEART

MENTAL HEALTH AND GOD

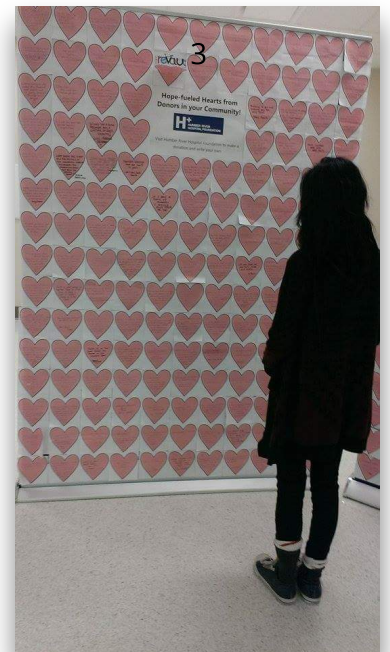
By Jane Pangilinan

I have anxiety, OCD, and major depression. Having trouble speaking in public was a hindrance I could work around but being unable to reach out to my sister who is so dear to my heart made me miserable and even more anxious. The anxiety I experienced was more than just mindless worrying, it took over my life. I had trouble asking for help so when I needed it most I was at the nearly worst I could possibly reach in my situation. I also had to deal with OCD. For those who don't know, OCD stands for Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. Most cases are related to cleanliness due to stereotype but mine does not fall under that category. I became obsessive in finishing school-related duties and became overwhelmed. Unable to put aside all the tasks I wanted to do before I slept, I ended up not sleeping at all. I couldn't just turn off my brain. I was hyperactive.

My mother did not know what to do with me and, pray as she might, I had no where to turn to. It never occurred to me that I could turn to God. We ended up at the hospital after fitful nights and I spent months there, no visitors besides my mother allowed. As someone with mental health problems, the piece of advice that I am given the most is to trust God. In fact, I am often criticized concerning my faith because of the issues that I have. If I believed in God in the first place, why have doubt, fear, or sadness at all? This brings about the question; in what way does God work? He does not challenge us to a battle unconquerable; rather it is the trials we face that often bring us back to God if we have drifted away or bring us even closer to God than we have ever been before. It is because of sin that we experience sadness, pain, and grief.

Job described it as “My bones are pierced in me at night, And my gnawing pains take no rest.” (Job 30:17) Job lost everything, God's will did not keep him from experiencing trials. Had he not been through the trials that he experienced, would we look to Job's story as an example of faith and perseverance? It is only after the trial that people come to realize what a true blessing it is to be near to God. It

is the trial that makes us build in character, faith, and spirit. Being in a mentally ill state gave me a story to tell that people will literally incline their ears to listen to. It is through my testimony that I hope I can bring people closer to God. As a community, we should not dismiss mental issues in the same way that we do not dismiss grief for those we have lost. We should stand together because that is what God would have us do; cast neither blame nor judgement but forgive, pray, and love unconditionally.



CHURCH SURVEY ONLINE

Don't forget to do the church survey online posted on our official website: www.mtzion.ca

Each member is requested to complete the survey by June 1, 2017.

YOUTH WEEK OF PRAYER | METRO NORTH CENTRAL

By Jane Pangilinan & Jessica Gamez

During the MNC Youth Week of Prayer, which ran from March 11th to 18th, Pastor Jorge Torres from Swift Current, Saskatchewan, dived into the book of Exodus and helped us study it within the context of our own lives. In theory, we as followers of Christ need to cross the Red Sea, the obstacles in our life keeping us away from God. The parting and crossing of the Red Sea can only be done with God's help and love. Even then, once we have crossed to the other side, the journey does not end there. In the same way that the Israelites felt a pull to go back to Egypt with enslavement as an inevitable path, there will be an urge for us to go back to our old ways. It is only through God that we can reach the promised land, the land of milk and honey, and salvation.

On the first night, Pastor Jorge begins with his testimony, talking of a life without the presence of his dad. Though his father was there physically, he was not there to teach his children, he was emotionally unavailable, and he was not a father. Without a fatherly figure in his life, Jorge found something to fill the void. His first-hand experience is a testament to the statement: "If you are not a father or mother to your children, someone else will be". By the age of 17 years, he had turned to drug dealing and a life on the

streets, resulting in his arrest. Never will I forget hearing of the shooting that happened in Jorge's house because of his street reputation. One where his nephews were inches close to death and a room away from tragedy. Pastor Jorge credits God for saving the lives of his sisters, his mother, his nephews, and himself.

Youth Prayer Week hosted by the Metro North Central Youth Association brought light to a few things about our own lives and a even more insights on youth evangelism. Speaker and Pastor Jorge Torres and his sermon The Exodus: It's Time

"If you are not a father or mother to your children, someone else will be"

changed the way we thought about our own spiritual growth.

There are many questions one can ask themselves concerning the spreading of the word of the gospel.

Here are a few:

1. Are you hindering yourself from connecting with God?

In Pastor Jorge's eyes, social media is a boundary for us and developing a better relationship with God. If you can spend so much time eyeing what



PHOTO - METRO NORTH

other people have that you do not, flipping through apps instead of communicating face to face, and snapping moments that won't last forever, you could be using that time to connect with God.

2. Are you an obstacle for others in their spiritual relationship?

People are always searching for something. Whether it be the truth or the penultimate reason to live, humans are instilled with a longing for more. God wants us to be a light and not a blockade. So ask yourself, what are you doing to aid the spreading of the word? Or are you a disruption?

3. Can God's word wait?

The answer is as complicated as the word "no". No, God's direction is specific when it comes to the Bible and it is clearly stated that we are to be the gateway for others to get to God.

The time for change is not tomorrow; it is now.

PHOTO - METRO NORTH CENTRAL





AN INSIDE LOOK: AUDIO VISUAL | FAITH TEAM

By AC Aguinaldo

The audio-visual (AV) department is a part of the Faith team. Our primary responsibility is to position technology as a tool to help our pastors, worship leaders and the congregation, be heard and seen clearly. As you may have noticed, our church has grown immensely over the last few years. We now have more brothers and sisters filling into the sanctuary and adjacent accommodation rooms, eager to worship and fellowship. Now, our leadership is responding to this 'good' problem by forming planning committees to scrutinize the many difficult long-term options we could take. However, our short-term solution should focus on making our AV infrastructure better adapted to maintaining the clarity of audio and video across all the rooms, despite the bigger crowd. The worship experience must be consistent regardless of where one might be sitting. This is important because the pastors and leaders need to make sure that every member is on the same page.

To achieve this goal, the current AV team has recognized, that expanding the video capabilities of our church is the best way to address our size problem. We needed to focus on these two things: projection and eventually video recording. We brainstormed a rough plan on what Mt Zion's AV system should look like in the future. We identified the key components that the AV system needed to have, to function as our church needs it to, and we sought to find and prepare the space that could accommodate this.

Over the past 2 years, we've made careful decisions, while working with the church board, in obtaining these pieces. We purchased a powerful computer, a 27-inch iMac that can drive all the audio and visual hardware and software applications that the church needed. We purchased a site license for Pro Presenter 5, an award-winning presentation application that is now being used by the communication team for creating and presenting inspiring worship slides. We also upgraded our internet to respectable speeds. Eventually, we moved towards equipping the adjacent rooms with projection and video receiving capabilities. High-definition cables carrying the video and audio feed were run through the building. Then, our hardworking volunteers installed a projector with a ceiling lift in the Fellowship hall, and two high-definition televisions were each mounted in the kitchen and the deacon's room. The completion of this phase of the project significantly increased our church capacity. People in the fellowship hall and volunteers in the kitchen and deacon's room are now able to participate in the corporate worship. Finally, the video recording and production team was officially launched this year. An entry-level professional video mixer and video camera was purchased and set-up in the Sabbath School office. I'm excited because streaming will soon follow. It's amazing to recognize how far we've come this last 2 years, and how God has equipped our church with appropriate equipment and

passionate volunteers, despite our limited resources.

We performed upgrades in the visual projection and video recording aspects of our system, and this year we look to perform much needed cable management and draft a schematic diagram of our set up. In doing these upgrades, we can alleviate congestion in the sanctuary, and have set ourselves up for live streaming and building a video database for reference purposes. These new capabilities put the faith team in a better position to



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/mountzionsda/>

ABOUT US

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